

Carbon samples were taken as available but charcoal was surprisingly scarce at the site, and many samples obtained were not useful for dating because of the disturbances described above. Only 5 samples were submitted, along with one sample of mussel shell.

Burials were recorded by large-scale drawings and photography, with exact orientation measured by a Brunton compass. Bones that could be removed with no damage were left untreated, but in several cases the skeletal remains were so friable that Gelva was applied prior to removal.

All recovered materials and related documentation are on file in the Archeology Laboratories, Museum of Man, Wake Forest University.

Stratigraphy

An idealized profile of the Donnaha Site would reveal rather simple stratigraphy consisting of a 20-40 cm plow zone underlain by a dark, organic-stained midden varying from 20 cm to 1 m or more in thickness; the midden is underlain by yellow to yellow-brown sterile sands which continue down to the water table, ca. 2-6 m below surface. Unfortunately, this uncomplicated sequence rarely was encountered, having been altered by both cultural and natural processes.

For example, on the backswamp slope of the levee two plow zones were found, separated by a stratum of near-sterile alluvium. The lower plow zone developed in the midden, but the upper zone also was in midden deposits (Fig. 5). Apparently this southern slope of the levee accumulated a midden either as primary or secondary refuse (Schiffer 1976:30) or, less likely, through incremental migration of materials washing from the levee crest. At sometime in the historic period this deposit was plowed to a depth of at least 20 cm and then capped with alluvium in a single flooding episode. Following this, continuing cultivation of the levee slope and crest moved midden deposits downslope, in turn covering the alluvium with a second plow zone. The present farmers of the Donnaha bottom, William and Archie Doub, have confirmed that the last 40 years of plowing have steadily decreased the relief on the backswamp site of the levee. As expected, no intact cultural features were found above the lower plow zone.

The other major cultural activity affecting the stratigraphy began with the prehistoric occupation and continues to the present, namely digging. Whether a consequence of the loose sandy soil, noxious vapors from the river or other incitements, the Donnaha occupants and their dogs excavated hundreds of pits. There are pits, pits in pits and pits through pits. Some were dug for human interments, some for dog burials; there are post holes for the structures, while other pits are filled with midden debris. Seemingly a few were excavated for practice. In many cases pits went undetected in our excavation of the midden stratum only to become evident as dark stains limned against the lighter matrix below the midden, so the overlying deposits underwent varying degrees of mixing incurred by the aboriginal digging. Within the last 50 years, and especially during the last 20, additional disturbances have been created by relic hunters. These recent pits are often